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INK OCHi

FIRST OF ITS KIND FROM KERALA

62

In Conversation with
BHARGAVI GUNDALA

- THE HALF LIFE OF VALLEY K
- WORLD'S OLDEST WINE
- GRILLED GARLIC AND HERB SHRIMP

STUNNING LIFE-LIKE FIGURES HAND CARVED FROM LIME TREE WOOD

BY
PETER DEMETZ

CULTURAL eMAGAZINE
INK OCHi
FIRST OF ITS KIND FROM KERALA

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Editor's Note

WOOD CRAVING

Although the history of using wood carving in arts goes back to prehistoric times when wooden objects had a specific ritual function – the oldest wood sculpture is *Shigir Idol* carved around 11,000 years ago – we will start our historical overview with the middle ages. Christianity discovered relatively early the usefulness of wood for its religious purposes, carving crosses and various religious figures and saints out of this material.

Middle ages were also confined to a limited number of stories artists could convey in visual form, which were mainly decided upon at religious gatherings where dogmas were closely followed, and prescriptions about what is allowed and what is not guided much of the creative output of the period. Among the many pieces that stand out are *Gero Crucifix*, Tilman Riemenschneider's *Holy Blood Altar*, and *Röttgen Pietà*. Germany was among the most prolific regions in wood carving, leaving behind numerous masterpieces. Besides statues, wood was also carved for ceilings, altarpieces, and into portrait busts, and reliefs.

Here in this issue, we brings stunning life-like figures hand carved from lime tree wood by the artist Peter Demetz.

Happy Reading...!!
Varghese T. Thomas

TOHOKU

THROUGH THE EYES OF JAPANESE PHOTOGRAPHERS

2022 JULY 2 - 16

DURBAR HALL ART CENTRE, ERNAKULAM

Since its inception, Kerala Lalithakala Akademi has been actively promoting social and cultural exchange in partnership with similar institutions from India and abroad. As part of this mandate, Kerala Lalithakala Akademi presents an exclusive photography exhibition, "Tohoku-through the Eyes of Japanese Photographers - an attempt to bridge that gap between the out-of-the-ordinary lives of people following the earthquake and tsunami and their ordinary lives in the pre-disaster period." This exhibition is touring India as part of the Japan Foundation 70 years in India celebration. This exhibition is in partnership with the Japan Foundation, India, and Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design, and Technology, Bangalore. Through the exhibition, Kerala Lalithakala Akademi, along with the collaborators, are presenting individualistic viewpoints of works that represent the past, present, and future, enriching the understanding of culture, climate, and life in a region like Tohuku in Japan to the Kerala audiences.

Department of Cultural Affairs Govt. of Kerala

Kerala Lalithakala Akademi

JAPANFOUNDATION

70th Anniversary

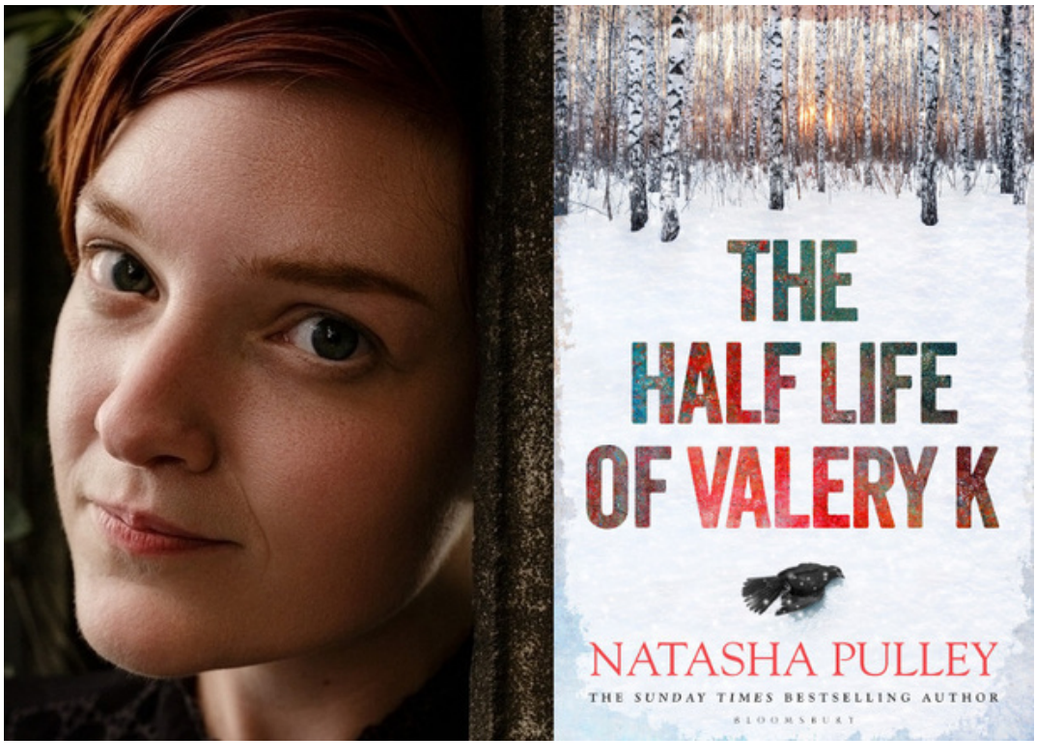
SRISHTI

MANIPAL ACADEMY of HIGHER EDUCATION

Charcoal on canson paper
by SEBY AUGUSTINE

ABOUT THE BOOK

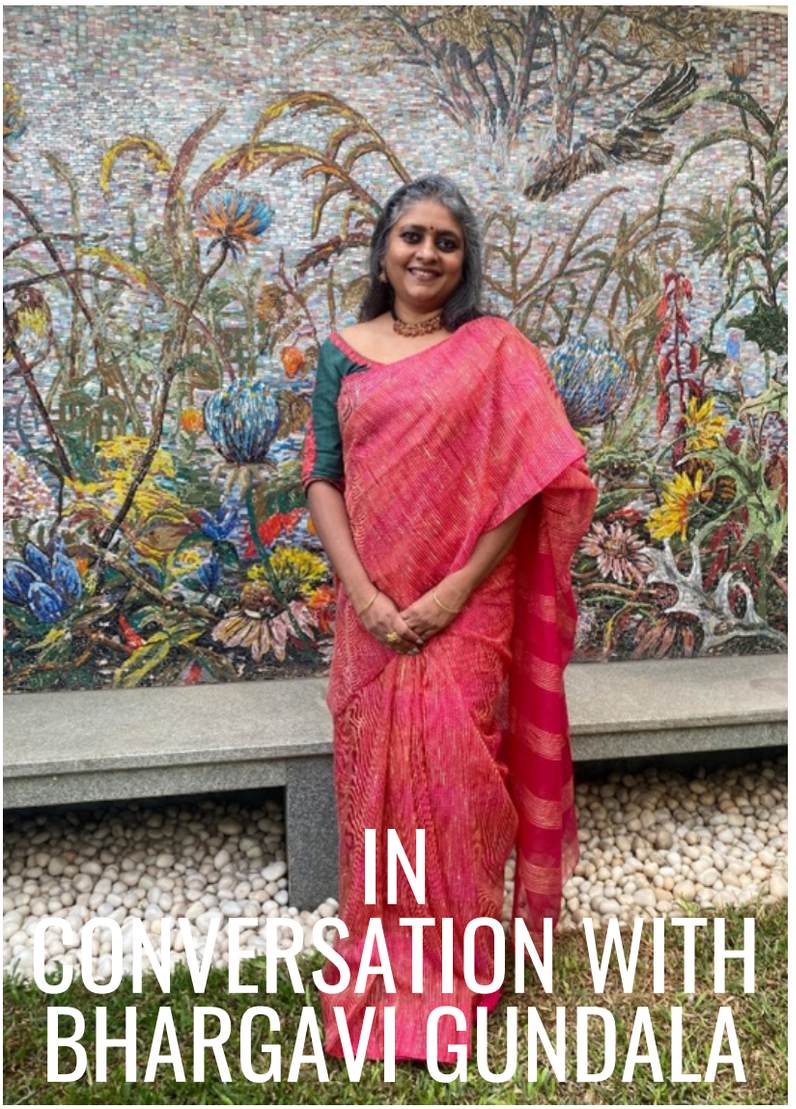
Source:
Topping Books, UK.



Description

The Times Historical Fiction Book of the Month The truth must come out. In 1963, in a Siberian gulag, former nuclear specialist Valery Kolkhanov has mastered what it takes to survive: the right connections to the guards for access to food and cigarettes, the right pair of warm boots to avoid frostbite, and the right attitude toward the small pleasures of life. But on one ordinary day, all that changes: Valery's university mentor steps in and sweeps Valery from the frozen prison camp to a mysterious unnamed town hidden within a forest so damaged it looks like the trees have rusted from within.

Here, Valery is Dr. Kolkhanov once more, and he's expected to serve out his prison term studying the effect of radiation on local animals. But as Valery begins his work, he is struck by the questions his research raises: what, exactly, is being hidden from the thousands who live in the town? And if he keeps looking for answers, will he live to serve out his sentence? Based on real events in a surreal Soviet city, and told with bestselling author Natasha Pulley's inimitable style, The Half Life of Valery K is a sweeping historical adventure. <>



IN CONVERSATION WITH BHARGAVI GUNDALA

Bhargavi Gundala is an artist, art collector and gallerist. She received her Bachelor's and Master's degree from Central University, Hyderabad and has been a gallerist for the past nine years. She is the director of Dhi Artspace & FACE - Foundation for Art and Culture Education.

Interview by:
Varghese T. Thomas

Her Journey...

Bhargavi did not want to start a gallery in Hyderabad as she was not sure about its commercial aspects but used to collect contemporary artworks, especially those of the young artists. She travelled to many universities in the country during her studies . While in Baroda she visited MS University and fell in love with the culture there. What struck her most was the fact that there was no hierarchy and the student-teacher interaction and bond was quite different. Artists like K G. Subramanyan, Indrapramit Roy and others mingled with the students which resulted in a very organic growth - a beautiful bond between the students and the teachers. She was amazed by how every evening at four 'o'Clock after class, they would all sit with a cup of coffee or tea and talk about anything and everything about art . This made her think of experimenting with a similar concept in Hyderabad. >>

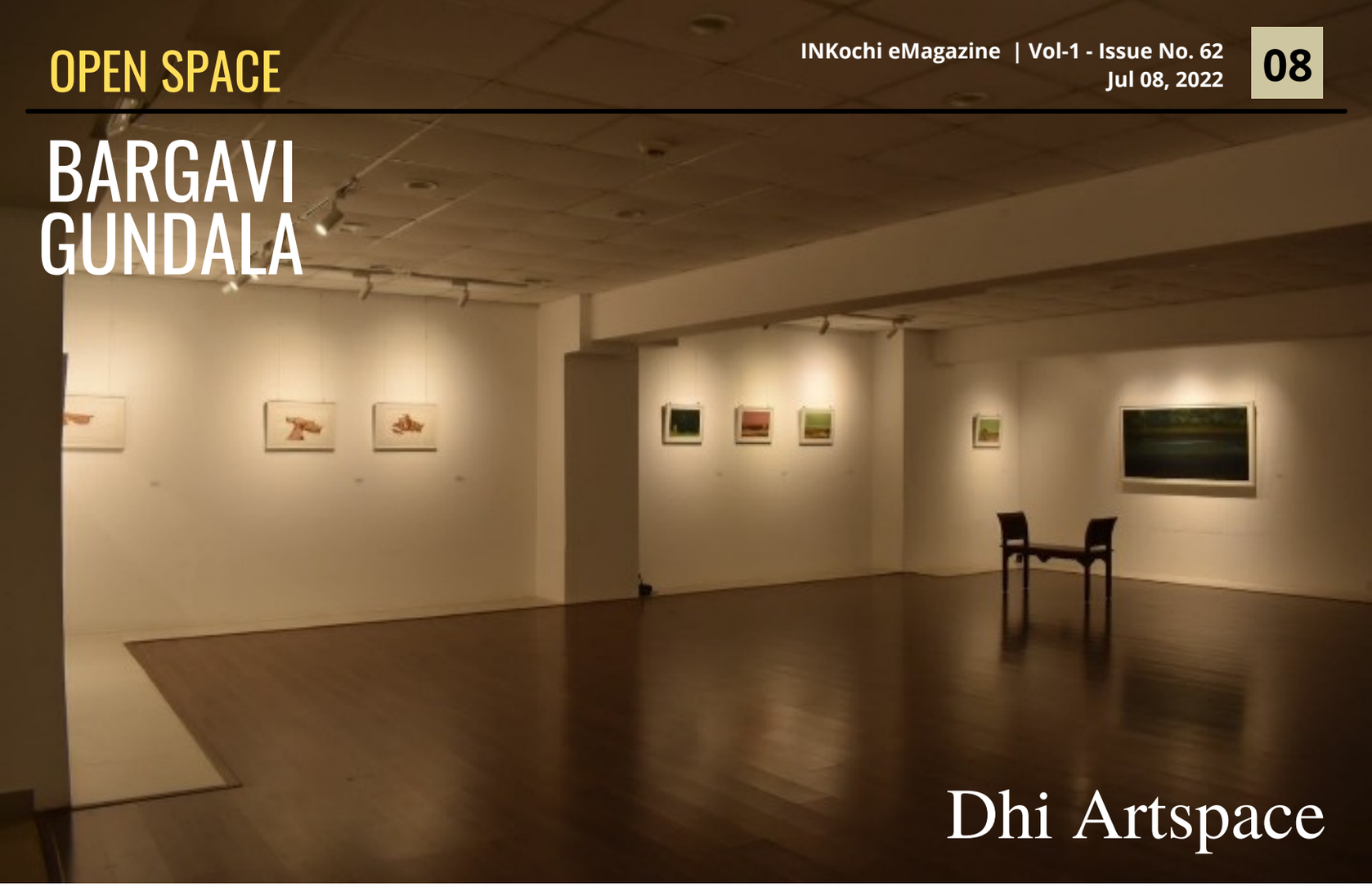
BARGAVI GUNDALA

Dhi Artspace

Hyderabad, at that time, already had a number of galleries. So she thought of starting a gallery which would provide an interactive space – a space, a café where people can sit, talk and come out with interesting and unique ideas. At that point in time there was one such space called Lamakaan which catered mostly to those into theatre. There was nothing inclusively for art. “So I started this space with a library, I'm a printmaker so I started a printmaking studio and a very large space,” recalls Bhargavi.

Slowly people, especially youngsters, started coming in. After talking to them, Bhargavi realised that there was always a need among the young generation for support as many of them were not getting an opportunity to showcase their work. She noted how some of them were really creative and extremely good with their work / promising as an artist. >>

BARGAVI GUNDALA



This impelled her to start the gallery called "**Dhi Artspace**". 'Dhi' is a Sanskrit word which has about 108 meanings. Dhi is budhi or intellect. "In Dhi we nurture, we provide opportunity and promote young artists," adds the gallerist. Bhargavi only works with young artists, and not with established ones as her commitment is to create a platform for the young artists and take them to the next.

Sailing through the pandemic…

Bhargavi was surprisingly quite busy during the pandemic, even when all the galleries were closed and no business was happening. She used the opportunity to start something new. At first, during the lockdown she started posting a timeline of Indian art as not many were aware of it. She published one post a day - one example and a write up and this required a lot of work. "While doing it I felt I needed to go a little further. Being in Hyderabad for so long, I felt Hyderabad is known for very clichéd reasons – Biriyani, Pearls, Salar Jung Museum… >>

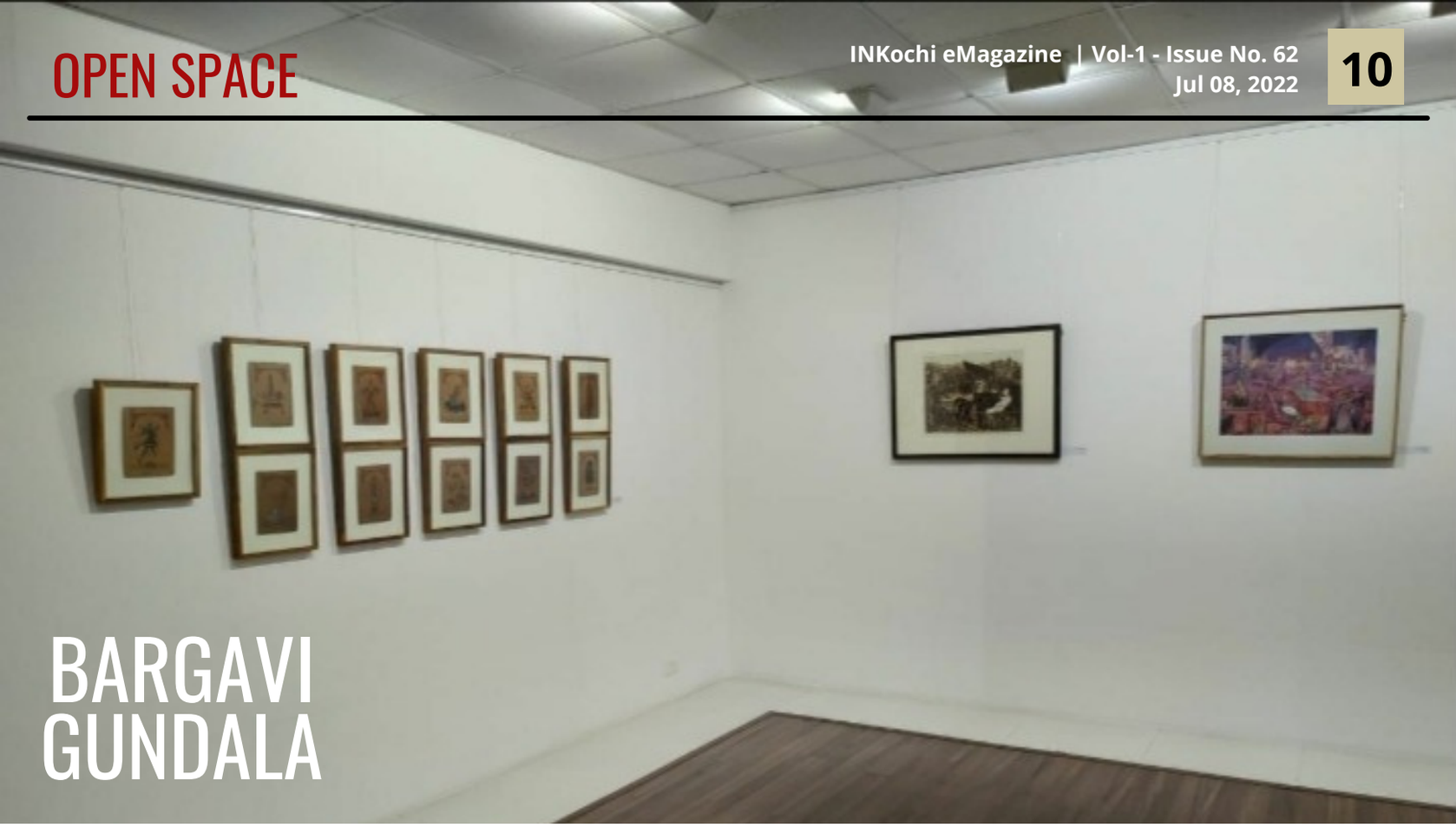
BARGAVI GUNDALA

Hyderabad has much more than that. We have wonderful stepwells, ithars, bakeries. So I started talking to Hyderabadi people on the phone, over zoom calls and started recording them – in the form of oral histories. ”In this way she did a series of 24 talks.

“We also supported young artists,” adds Bhargavi, “we gave them a number of grants, as a monetary support during the pandemic.”

Her observation about why people/public is distant from Art…

Bharghavi thinks that it is not because art is not commercialised, but probably the lack of exposure that makes people feel distant. The public will be distant from things they are illiterate about; when they do not know about the culture of art, they do not know the value of art. Art has value not only in terms of money. Art has value in terms of intellect, in terms of aesthetics, in terms of growth, in the well-being of the person. But this is not known. “People know only traditional art forms. They are not exposed to contemporary art. When the Biennale happened, probably local people didn’t attend. >>



BARGAVI GUNDALA

But now all the local people and local educational institutions are exposed to that kind of art. Now people know at least what an installation is!" comments Bhargavi.

Relevance of detachment from art…

According to Bhargavi, attachment and detachment should go hand in hand. There are many artists who are possessive about art and can't separate themselves from it.

"***In my opinion you have to be attached to art until you finish it. After you finish you have to detach. Similarly with our children. Till they develop they have their own wings we have to be attached to them and after that detach them from yourself. When we don't know how to do it we get into trouble. Let them go so that they return to you."***

Art and Kochi…

Bhargavi remarks that South India is much ahead in the art scene now. Kochi has been placed on the international plane by Bose Krishnamachari. "I find him as a person who makes things possible. It is about giving; it is about creating that oneness. >>

BARGAVI GUNDALA

He has a different capacity altogether. He has brought Kochi or Kerala on an international art platform. Today everybody knows Kochi."

Message for younger people in Kerala…

In Bhargavi's observation Kerala artists tend to fantasize quite a bit, which is probably due to the influence of their art school. She feels that there should be the influence of the teacher not by his work but by his words. Learning from someone doesn't mean to imitate how he paints, rather learning how he looks at things, how he reacts, and disciplines himself while working." Just because somebody has a market doesn't mean everyone can have the same market,"says Bahrgavi.

"What I suggest is that the younger generation should focus on their language," adds Bhargavi. "Everybody should have their own language. When you have your own language and identity nobody can copy you. I request all the young artists to work hard. Be simple, honest and be grounded. Once you follow these three things, look at things in a simpler way. Close your eyes and what do you see… just represent that". She firmly believes that creating one's own language is the way to excel.

Next project in Kerala?

We want to be a part of Kochi Biennale and also collaborate with any gallery who wants to walk with young artists. <>

WORLD'S OLDEST UNOPENED BOTTLE OF WINE REMAINS SEALED SINCE THE 4TH CENTURY

Source:
My Modern Met
By Sara Barnes

Wine has a long and rich history in human existence that predates even written records—but suffice to say that our love affair with the beverage is ancient. One theory postulates that the fermentation of alcohol took off sometime between 10,000 to 8,000 BC, thanks to the shift from nomadic to more settled culture. Because people were staying in one place, they began raising crops that eventually lead to the production of wine.

We don't have any bottles left from that early era, but there is one variety that dates back much farther than any of us have been alive. So, how old is the oldest bottle of wine? Known as Römerwein, or the Speyer wine bottle, it's at least 1,650 years old. >>

Photo: Historical Museum of the Palatinate

WORLD'S OLDEST UNOPENED BOTTLE OF WINE REMAINS SEALED SINCE THE 4TH CENTURY

This dates back to the 4th century, sometime between 325 and 359 AD. The 1.5-liter glass vessel was discovered during the excavation of a Roman nobleman's tomb in modern-day Germany.

If you're wondering what wine this old smells or even tastes like, experts still do not know. They are uncertain what would happen to the liquid if it were exposed to air, so it has stayed sealed with a thick stopper of wax and olive oil. At this point, whatever alcohol was in there is probably long gone.

This incredible piece of history is now on display at the Historical Museum of the Palatinate in Speyer, Germany, where only one man will handle the bottle because everyone else is "just too afraid."

The world's oldest bottle of wine is probably older than you think. It's at least 1,650 years old!

Called the Römerwein, or Speyer wine bottle, it dates back to the 4th century.

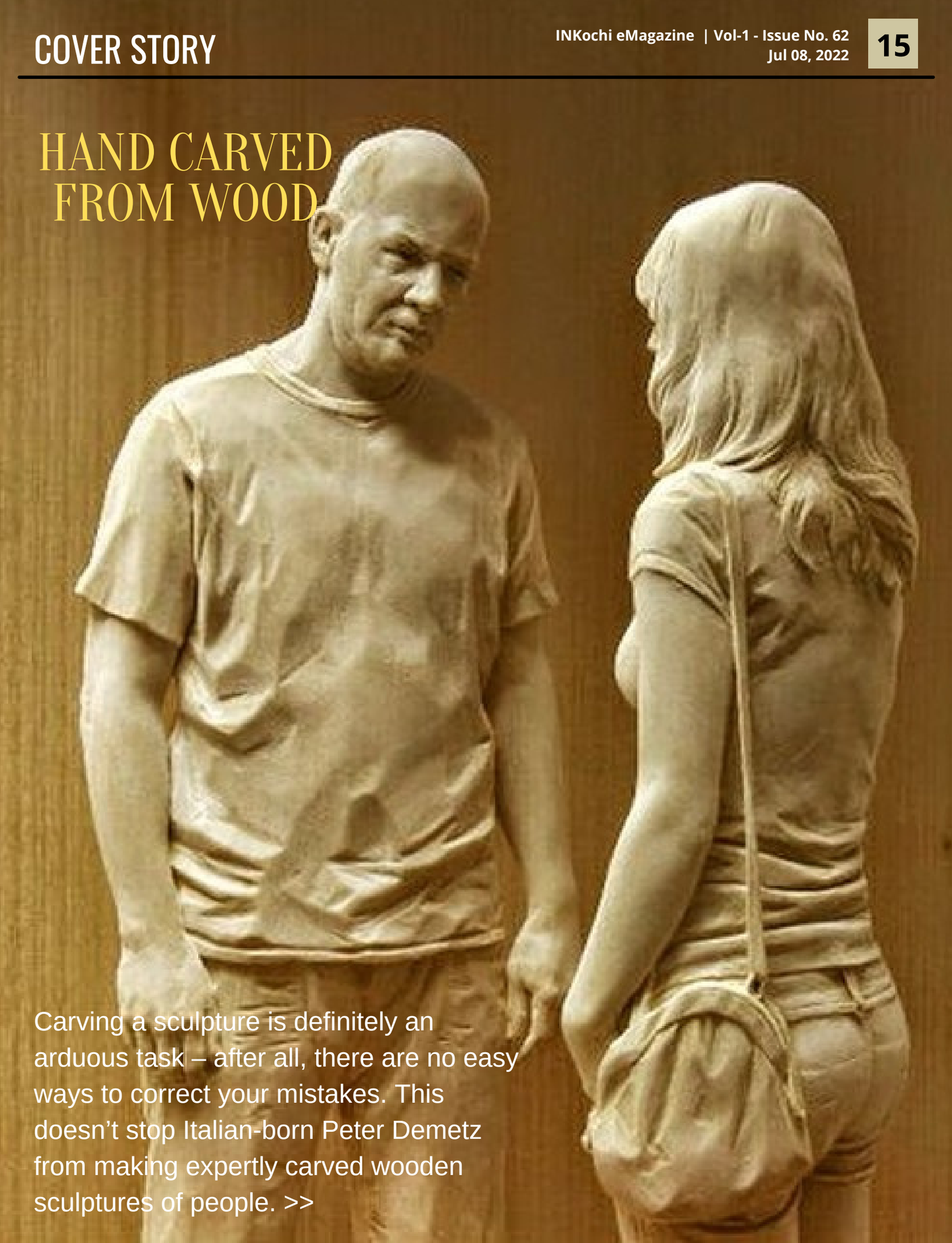
Experts are unsure of how the bottle would react once opened, so it has remained tightly sealed. <>

HAND CARVED FROM LIME TREE WOOD BY PETER DEMETZ

TEXT BY:
SARA BARNES

Italian artist Peter Demetz brings ordinary wood to life with his incredible, hand-carved figures. >>

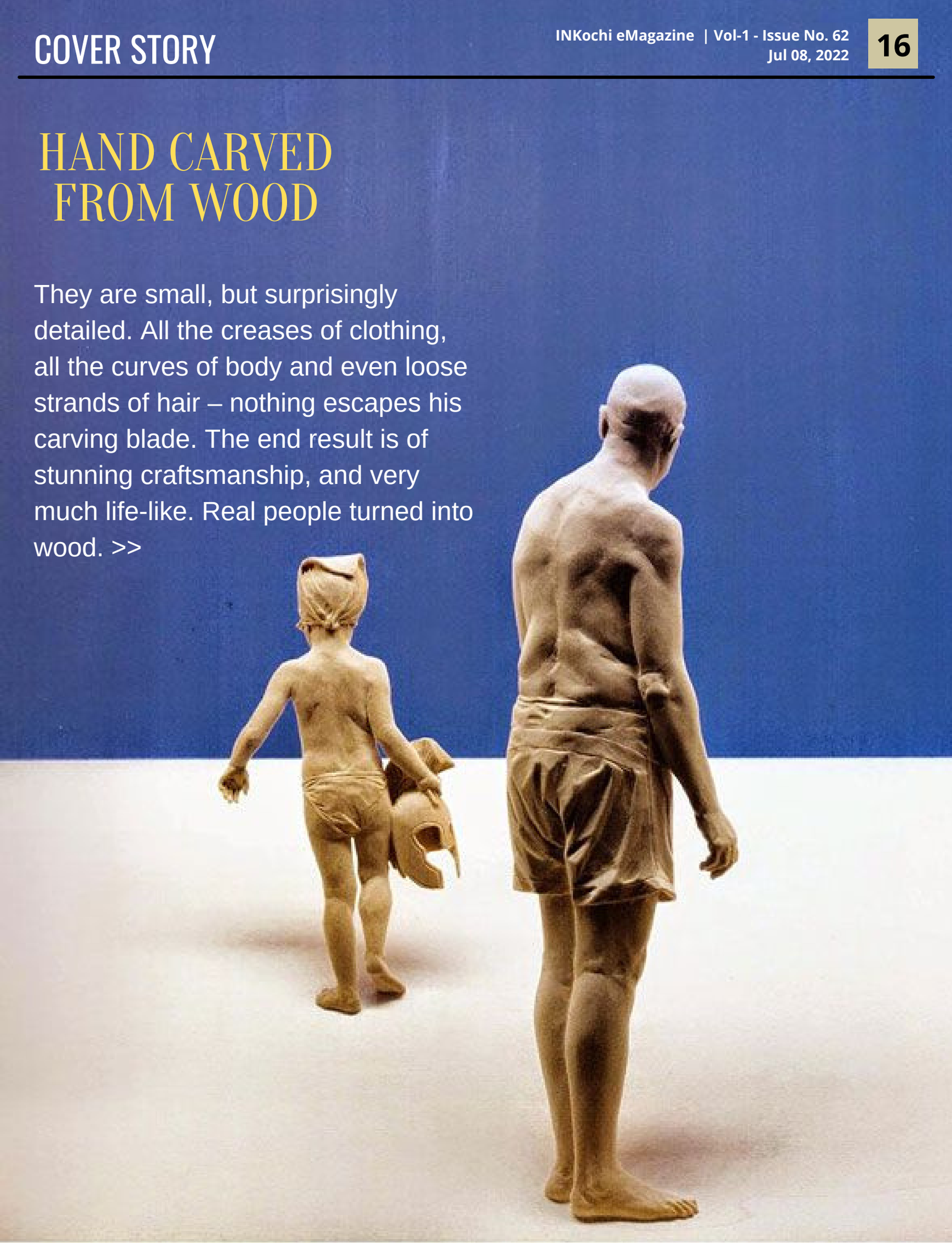
HAND CARVED FROM WOOD



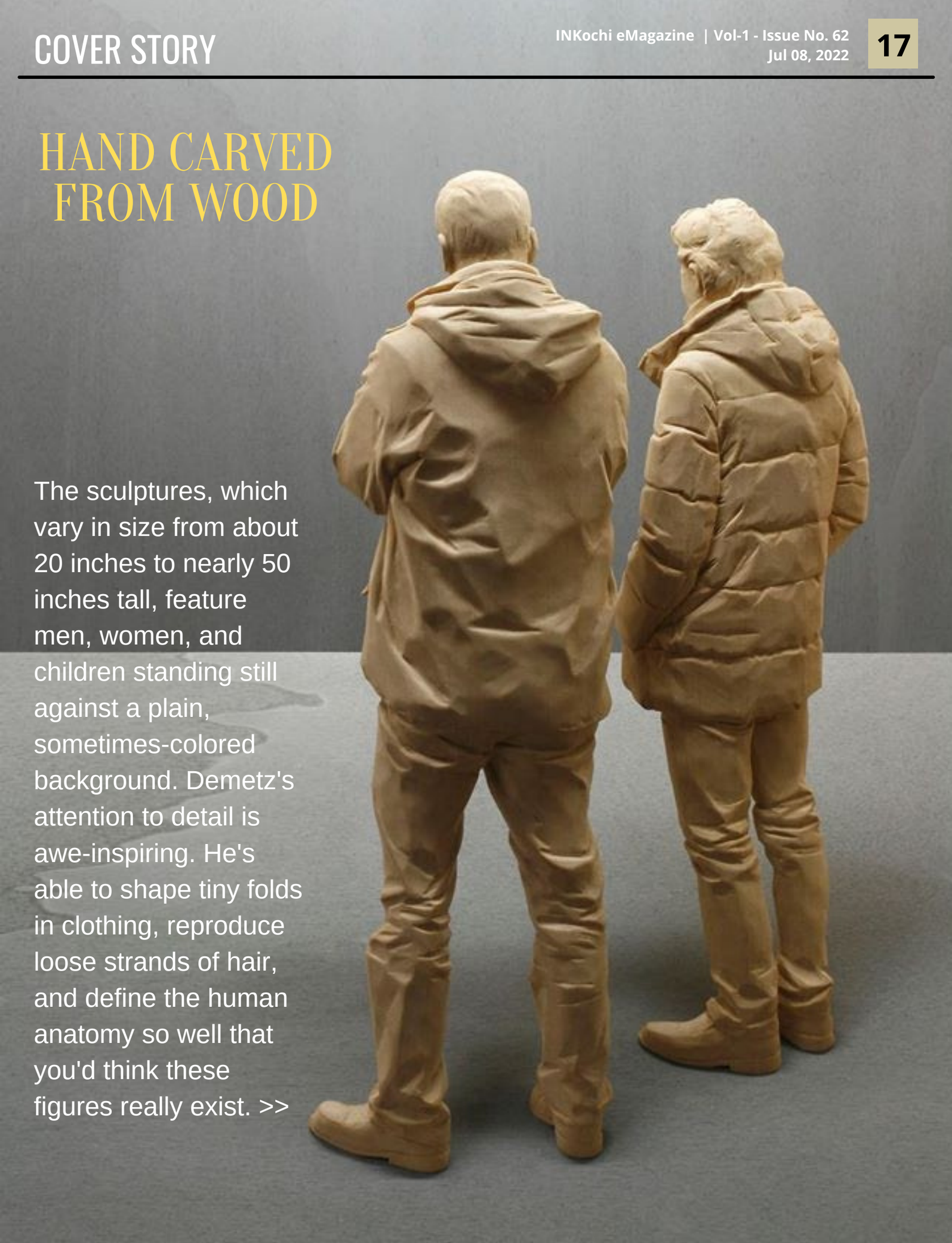
Carving a sculpture is definitely an arduous task – after all, there are no easy ways to correct your mistakes. This doesn't stop Italian-born Peter Demetz from making expertly carved wooden sculptures of people. >>

HAND CARVED FROM WOOD

They are small, but surprisingly detailed. All the creases of clothing, all the curves of body and even loose strands of hair – nothing escapes his carving blade. The end result is of stunning craftsmanship, and very much life-like. Real people turned into wood. >>

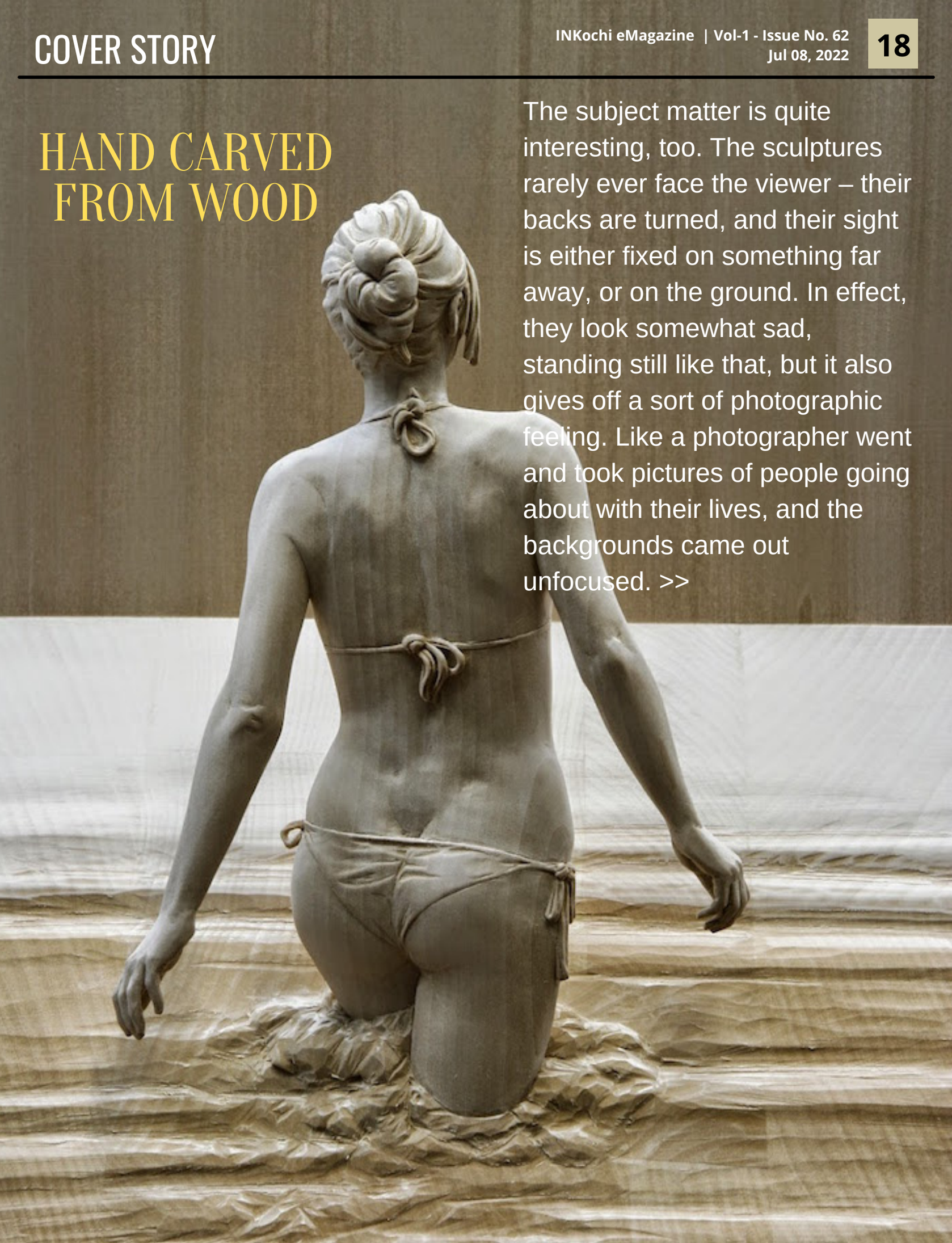


HAND CARVED FROM WOOD



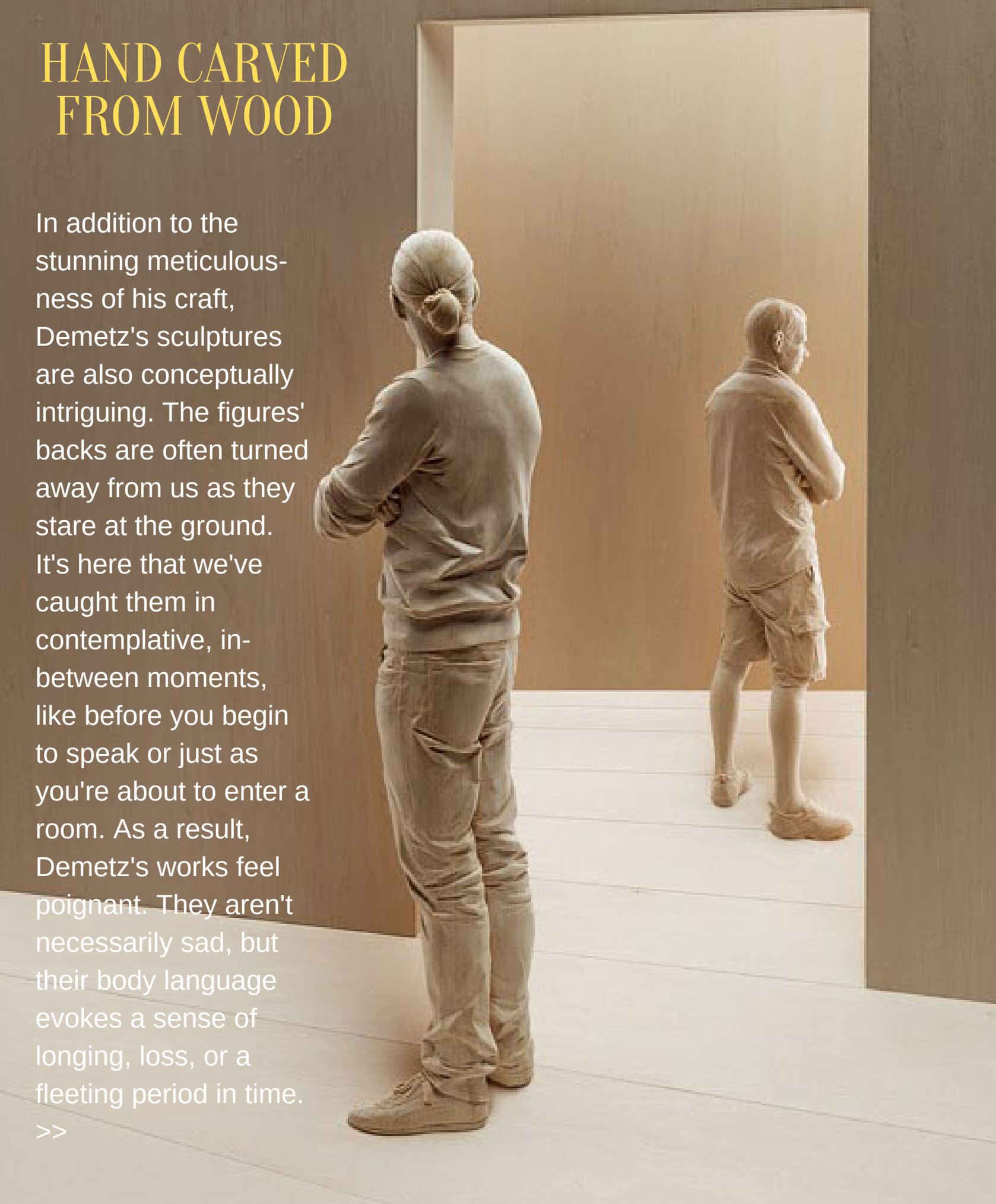
The sculptures, which vary in size from about 20 inches to nearly 50 inches tall, feature men, women, and children standing still against a plain, sometimes-colored background. Demetz's attention to detail is awe-inspiring. He's able to shape tiny folds in clothing, reproduce loose strands of hair, and define the human anatomy so well that you'd think these figures really exist. >>

HAND CARVED FROM WOOD



The subject matter is quite interesting, too. The sculptures rarely ever face the viewer – their backs are turned, and their sight is either fixed on something far away, or on the ground. In effect, they look somewhat sad, standing still like that, but it also gives off a sort of photographic feeling. Like a photographer went and took pictures of people going about with their lives, and the backgrounds came out unfocused. >>

HAND CARVED FROM WOOD



In addition to the stunning meticulousness of his craft, Demetz's sculptures are also conceptually intriguing. The figures' backs are often turned away from us as they stare at the ground. It's here that we've caught them in contemplative, in-between moments, like before you begin to speak or just as you're about to enter a room. As a result, Demetz's works feel poignant. They aren't necessarily sad, but their body language evokes a sense of longing, loss, or a fleeting period in time.

>>

HAND CARVED FROM WOOD

The sculptural work of Peter Demetz (1969) further develops the performativity and spatial manipulations, announced by Romana Prinoth's photographic "surgery" of reality. Here too, the spectator encounters psychic interiors, dioramas of a soul and a thought, staged within ascetic and anti-monumental miniature-chambers, carved with a unique geometrical precision and clarity within the bright fabric of lime tree wood. >>

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HAND CARVED FROM WOOD

Performing the acrobatics of depth and flatness, Demetz's little theaters of human affairs and private worlds are masterfully illuminated reliefs that challenge the spectator's perception with their spatial unfolding and seduce with their illusion as well as with their photographic quality of represented world.

Outside of clearly defined time, within an anonymous, almost abstract space, they are haunted places of high spiritual intensity, stages for people's ordinary poses, situations and matters, based upon the artist's own observations or his own photographs and models – the friends' casual conversations, an intimate touch, a glance in a passage, a moment of a deep thought, self-reflection, a secret encounter, a rare feeling of belonging, a sadness, a solitude, a collectiveness, a sense of communal spirit, suspended in a vacuum of a phantom-like space. >>

HAND CARVED FROM WOOD

Such is Demetz's collection of gestures, his intimate diary-like showcases of reflection - mirrors of people's emotions and elemental passions, acted out with a unique refinement in a stillness of a reduced architectural context. The artist emphasizes the relationship between the figures and the architecture and underlines the spatial play of proximity and distance. >>

HAND CARVED FROM WOOD

Playing with their threedimensionality, „commuting“ between the surface and multilayered structure and exposing their compressed spatial volume (often not exceeding the size of ca 50 cm x 60 cm), Demetz’s sculptures engage the spectator in an active process of viewing and participating, provoking often an irritation via optical instability and changable gestalt, depending upon the spectator’s movement and an angle of viewing.

The spectator’s eye (and in fact the entire corporeal presence) is invited to enter the altar-like interior and to experience its contemplative ambiance and spatial habitat. >>

HAND CARVED FROM WOOD

Conceived for the 3rd Trienala Ladina MIRRORED STORIES exhibition, Demetz's sculpture, entitled „....“ is a mise en scene of a split self: „bühnenbild“, spread through the doubled space of the exhibition, frames a solitary female figure, an isolated actress on a stage of the theatrics of civilisational alienation, immersed in a necessary process of revisiting the humanities's ethical paradigms. <>

Writer - Sara Barnes is a Staff Editor at My Modern Met, Manager of My Modern Met Store, and co-host of the My Modern Met Top Artist Podcast. As an illustrator and writer living in Seattle, she chronicles illustration, embroidery, and beyond through her blog Brown Paper Bag and Instagram @brwnpaperbag. She wrote a book about embroidery artist Sarah K. Benning titled 'Embroidered Life' that was published by Chronicle Books in 2019. Sara is a graduate of the Maryland Institute College of Art. She earned her BFA in Illustration in 2008 and MFA in Illustration Practice in 2013.

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KAVALAPARA PALACE

Text & Photos
PRAJI MANNANUR

The current dilapidated state of Kavalapara Palace, a historic monument which was to become a protected monument, situated in Ottapalam taluk of Palakkad district, Kerala.

The the reality is, tens of thousands of precious documents that have been lost forever due to age and neglect.

The dilapidated state of the palace was further revealed with these images.

GRILLED GARLIC AND HERB SHRIMP

Recipe by: Olia, Simple Recipes

Nothing beats this Grilled Garlic and Herb Shrimp! Oh, man, you have got to give this one a try! Every bite is as if the ocean lives in your mouth! Taste the freshness of the shrimp with the delicious garlic and herbs! Make sure to serve these bad boys immediately. They taste best when hot! Serve them over rice or pasta, and you have yourself a meal to remember!

By the way, feel free to make this recipe a spicy version. Just simply add chilli powder to the marinade. I highly recommend it! Anyway, have a great one, friends. I hope you are all well today. Enjoy!

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp ground paprika
- 2 tbsp fresh minced garlic
- 2 tsp Italian seasoning blend
- 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- ¼ c olive oil
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 2 tsp dried basil leaves
- 2 tbsp brown sugar, packed
- 2 lbs large shrimp (21-25 per pound), peeled and deveined

>>

GRILLED GARLIC AND HERB SHRIMP

Directions:

- Add garlic, paprika, lemon juice, Italian seasoning, basil, olive oil, brown sugar, and pepper into a mixing bowl. Whisk until well mixed.
- Add the shrimp and toss until well coated.
- Cover the bowl with plastic wrap, then place it inside the fridge to marinate for about 2 hours.
- Prepare the grill and preheat to medium-high.
- Brush the grill with a bit of oil.
- Remove the shrimp from the bowl, then shake off any excess liquid.
- Put the shrimp onto the preheated grill and cook each side for about 5 minutes or until done.
- Remove from the grill onto a clean serving plate.
- Serve immediately with lemon slices on the side and enjoy! <>

Keoladeo National Park
Bharatpur
PC: SUDHIR SHIVARAM

MALAMPUZHA DAM

PC: SHAFERR V.P